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CIRCULAR LETTER

OF THE

RIGHT REV. DR. MULLOCK,

TO THE

Clergy and Laity of the Diocese of St. John's,

On his return from the Eternal City, where he had
been on the occasion of the Canonization
of the Japanese Martyrs.

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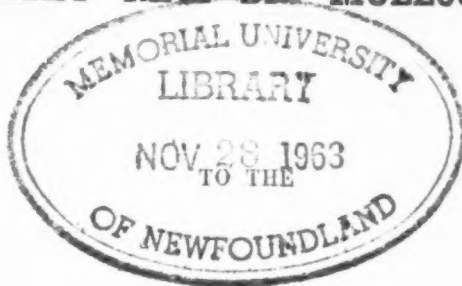
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DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,—

In responding to the call of our Holy Father Pius IX., to attend at the Canonization of St. Peter Baptist and his companions the Japanese Martyrs, and of St. Michael de Sanctis, I was obliged for a short time to leave you and proceed to the Holy City. Though on my arrival here and on the Sunday following I addressed you in the Cathedral, still, as many could not assist then, I judged it better to give in this form a succinct account of the great ceremony, and to add a few observations on what came under my knowledge during my absence. Never before, in the history of the Catholic Church, was such an assembly of Bishops from all parts of the world summoned together. It was at the same time the grandest and most striking manifestation of the Catholicity of the Church, and the great moral and spiritual power of the successor of St. Peter, Pius IX. The power of the greatest temporal sovereigns is limited to their own realms, the power of the Popedom overshadows the earth. Thus we have seen that our Holy Father, merely by expressing a desire that all Bishops who could without detriment to their own Diocese absent themselves, should repair to Rome, collect around him the representatives of 100 millions of Catholics from every part of the world. Ireland, England and Scotland, Sweden, Prussia, Poland, Russia, the Germanic States, Catholic and Protestant, Austria Proper, Bohemia, Hungary, all are represented. Catholic Spain and France send half their Bishops. From all parts of the Turkish Empire in Europe, Syria and Egypt, the Bishops of

every rite, Latin, Greek and Armenian, hasten to obey the voice of their Spiritual Father. Even the distant Pacific is represented. South America sends several of her Bishops, notwithstanding the distance, and our own part of the world, North America, both Federal and British, is represented by a great portion of its Bishops, and but for the war raging in the States (may God soon establish there once more peace and union), many more would have been present. It is not alone those who assisted at the Canonization who conveyed their sympathies and that of their people to console the heart of Pius IX., the Bishops who were unavoidably absent were represented by their brethren. Amidst this glorious galaxy of piety, dignity and learning, two nations were, one totally, and the other partially, unrepresented. The Bishops of the noble but unhappy Kingdom of Portugal, now by its unchristian and Masonic Government, degraded below the rank of a Province, were prohibited from attending. The same party who have seized the reins of government in that unhappy land, have also lately banished the Sisters of Charity, who are venerated by the very Turks, after suppressing all other Religious Institutes. The King of Sardinia, or rather the infidel party whose stupid tool he is, prevented the Italian Bishops, both in his hereditary and usurped States, from joining their Brethren on this solemn occasion. Such is the idea modern revolutionists have of liberty. Whenever, through the weakness of the good, who form the overwhelming majority of the people, they get for a time power into their hands, murder, robbery, tyranny and confiscation, flourish until at length the people roused from their lethargy, arise in their might and re-establish the reign of order and justice. The Bishops from all parts of the world being assembled, the solemn ceremony of the Canonization of St. Peter Baptist and his Companion Martyrs and of St. Michael de Sanctis, was performed with a splendor never before equalled. At sunrise on the morning of the 8th of June the festival of the Descent of the Holy Ghost, the Artillery of St. Angelo, announced to the people of Rome and the thousands of strangers within her Gates that the auspicious day had arrived on which twenty-three Children of St. Francis, three Jesuits and one Trinitarian were to be enrolled among the Canonized Saints. At 7 o'clock, the procession issued from the Vatican palace and proceeded to the Church of St. Peter, singing the *Ave Maris Stella*, in honor of the Queen of all Saints. This temple, the grandest ever erected by man, was most magnificently adorned, the windows were darkened and thousands of wax lights which still seemed lost in the vast space, shed a religious light and showed the numerous paintings of the miracles of the Saints, which

adorned the edifice. Onward wound the procession, consisting of the Confraternities, the Regular and Secular Clergy of Rome, the Officials of the Papal Court, the banners of the Saints, carried by the Orders to which they belonged, the Civil and Military Authorities, the Abbots, Bishops, Patriarchs and Cardinals in crimson Copes and white Mitres, all bearing lighted wax torches, (the number of Mitred Prelates was over three hundred,) then came the Holy Father, born on his throne surrounded by the chief dignitaries of Church and State, the noble Roman and picturesque Swiss guards, blessing the kneeling multitude and the long lines of troops. Thousands of prayers, in every language, were offered up for him as he was born along. Three or four thousand priests from different lands (the French 'tis said sent three thousand priests from that great Catholic Nation) invoked blessings on the benign Father of the faithful, and fifty thousand people responded. The front of the Temple was ornamented with magnificent banners representing over the great central door, the Franciscan Martyrs, seated on the clouds of heaven, the Jesuit martyrs over the right hand door and the Trinitarian Confessor over the corresponding one. The rite of canonization is reserved to the Pope alone. It is the solemn declaration by the Pope, the Doctor of the Church, that the persons canonized are Saints rejoicing with God and that they may be invoked as such. This solemn act is only performed after the most mature, deliberate and minute enquiry into the lives of the Saints, and the most careful and *scientific* proofs of the miracles performed thro' their intercession, and long after their deaths, so that sometimes centuries pass away as in this recent case, before the final decision is given. The Roman Court challenges the investigation of the whole world in this solemn affair, all that human wisdom, learning, prudence and science can accomplish is exhausted in the process and the prayers of millions are invoked to aid the researches of those engaged in the enquiry. We now behold the Pope, the universal Doctor of the Church, seated before the High Altar of St. Peter's, surrounded by the Cardinals, Bishops, Doctors, Clergy and people, nor is the greatness of the world unrepresented; all that is grand and noble on earth. Royal personages and their Ambassadors the Military Chieftains and State Officials, the *élite* of the Nobility of every land are present. The postulation is made by the Cardinal Postulator, and the Litany of the Saints is chanted by the Papal Choir. Clergy and people all respond, and fifty thousand voices rose to Heaven in unison. A second postulation, or request, is made—the Pope calls on all to pray, entones the hymn of the Holy Ghost, the strain is taken up by the choir,

clergy, and people, and the vast Temple once more resounds with the voices of the assembled thousands like the "voice of many waters." The last and most pressing request is now made, and the Pontiff who holds the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven as the successor of Peter, finally pronounces the Decree as Doctor of the Church, enrolling the beatified individuals in the catalogue of the Saints. The usual formalities of the solemn recognition of the Decree are now performed, and the Holy Father intones the *Te Deum*. No one present can ever forget the glories of that hour, the Heavenly Jerusalem appeared opened. The sublime hymn was taken up by the Papal Choir, and sung verse by verse by the Bishops, clergy, and people. Fifty thousand voices proclaimed the glory of God in His Saints, and in a voice of thunder praised the Eternal Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, "*Te ceterum Patrem omnis terra veneratur,*" The Eternal Father all the earth adores for there was represented at the moment the whole earth by its Bishops, Clergy and people of all tribes and tongues, but of one Faith. The rolling of drums, and the sound of trumpets from the porch of the Temple, announced the glad tidings to the people outside, and the artillery of St. Angelo and the bells of Rome's 300 Churches, booming and pealing for an hour like the Archangel's summons told the Roman citizens that the triumph of the Martyrs was accomplished. The prayers of the newly canonized Saints were then recited, and the Pontifical blessing bestowed on the people. The Solemn Pontifical Mass was then sung by the Pope with the usual ceremonies, the Epistle and Gospel sang in Greek and Latin, the trumpets sounding at the Elevation. At the Offertory according to ancient usage the oblations were presented to the Pope, five wax candles richly painted and ornamented, two loaves of bread silvered and gilt with the Pontifical Arms, two small barrels of wine and water similarly decorated, and three ornamental cages, one containing two turtle doves, the other, two common doves, and the third, several small birds. The wax lights, wine and water as being used in the Mass are most appropriate offerings, dating from the Apostolic times, the turtles and doves signify the purity, charity and innocence of the canonized Saints, and the small birds in a lively manner represent the spiritual gifts they enjoyed while on earth and their desire now accomplished to fly to Heaven. Every ceremony in the Church has a beautiful poetic and mystic signification. The Church speaks to the senses, but at the same time touches the heart and elevates the intellect. The Indulgences are published, the great Ceremony is concluded, and the Holy Father now six hours occupied in the Canonization and Mass, is borne on his throne amidst the blessings of the countless

multitude, and of the Bishops and Clergy. Let us for a moment reflect on this Canonization. Is it for the great and powerful of the world that this extraordinary celebration, of which an Imperial coronation is but a shadow, is held? These Saints whom all the world combined to honor, were they like Cæsar or Napoleon, the lords and conquerors of the earth? No, they were poor and humble, their strength and power were in their humility; like their Divine Master who from the Cross conquered the World, they obtained all their honours by being tied to Crosses, and suffering an ignominious death in a far distant land. Over three centuries have now passed since St. Francis Xavier first planted the faith in Japan, and made numerous converts. The field was white for the harvest, and God sent laborers into his vineyard. For 40 years peace reigned and the multitude of Christians every day increasing renewed in that distant region the example of the Apostolic times. One of these revolutions so frequent and sudden in the East took place, and the reigns of power were seized by a tyrant called Taicosama; at first he seemed to favor the Christians, but this did not last long, and in 1587 he promulgated a decree, banishing all Missionaries from the Kingdom, though subsequently he relaxed its rigor so far as to allow the Jesuits to remain but for the service of the Portuguese alone. The Viceroy of the Philippine Islands having some weighty affairs to arrange with Taicosama sent four Franciscans, three priests, and a lay brother to Japan, in the quality of Legates. They gladly accepted the charge with the hope that the Ambassadorial character with which they were invested, might enable them to preach the gospel with greater liberty. Their names were Fathers Peter Baptist, Bartholomew Ruis, Francis of St. Michael, and Brother Gonsalvo Garcia, a lay-brother and interpreter. They were kindly received by the Emperor, presented their gifts and obtained leave to visit the principal cities. He was very much struck with their poverty, humility, and disinterestedness, and especially with the coarse habit of St. Francis. He even gave them leave to build a small Convent in Meaco, but on condition that they should not preach or make any Converts among the Japanese. These Apostolic men however, knew that they should "obey God, not man," that our Lord commanded the Gospel to be preached to all Nations. Accordingly, not only did they make Converts, but sent to Manilla for more Missionaries, and were speedily joined by Father Martin Blanco, and Father Michael Aquirre of the Ascension. The number of Converts made irritated the Bonzes, and they called on Taicosama to enforce the law. Although the Jesuits were partially tolerated, still three Japanese Members of the Society, were arrested, along with the Franciscans, and all

condemned to an ignominious death. The names of the Martyrs were St. Peter Baptist, the Superior of the Franciscans, a Spanish Nobleman of Castile, who had forsaken all to follow Christ and preach Him crucified. Father Martin Aquirre of the Ascension, also a Spanish Nobleman of Guiposcoa, who, despising the world and its riches, after distinguishing himself in the University of Alcala, went first on the Mission to Mexico, then to Manilla, and obtained the Crown of Martyrdom in Japan, at the age of thirty. Father Martin Blanco, of the same age, was born in Galicia, in Spain, he was a man of most mortified life, and perfectly acquainted with the Japanese language. Brother Philip a Jesu Las Casas, was born in Mexico, entered the Order of St. Francis, and was a striking instance of God's mercy, as he fled from the Convent and returned to the world; but touched by grace he at length begged to be re-admitted, and was received into the Convent of Manilla. Driven by shipwreck to Japan, he continued to labor for the salvation of souls, till his Martyrdom. Brother Francis, of St. Michael, also a lay-brother, born near Valladolid, in Spain, a man of most holy life, first was employed in Mexico, afterwards in the Philippine Islands. Brother Gonsalvo Garcia, a lay-brother, born in the East Indies, of Portuguese parents, was first received among the Jesuits, subsequently joined the Franciscans, he was interpreter and Catechist of the Mission. The other Franciscan Martyrs all belong to the 3rd Order, and were Native Japanese; their names were Paul Suzuqui, Gabriel a Disco, only 19 years of age; John Quizua, Thomas Danchi, Francis of Mecao, a physician, Thomas Cosaqui, who served at the altar, only 15 years old; Joachim Saquijor, the cook of the Convent and Hospital; Bonaventure a Meaco, a servant of the Convent, baptised in his youth, brought up in idolatry, but re-converted and was a most fervent Christian; Leo Carazuma, one of the interpreters; Mathias, who was taken in place of another; Anthony, only 13 years old, his father was a Chinese, his mother a Japanese, he was a scholar in the Convent, and always served St. Peter Baptist's Mass; Louis Ibarchi, a scholar, also only 12 years old, and a few months baptised; Paul Yuaniqui Ibarchi, lately baptised; Michael Cosoqui, a friend and neighbour of the Franciscans; Peter Sequeixein was taken while serving the martyrs in prison; Cosmas Requisa, though rich and noble, gave himself up to the service of the poor in the Franciscan Hospital, and was only lately baptised and made a member of the Order; Francis Fahelante was taken while serving the martyrs in prison; St. Paul Miki, a Jesuit student, was about being ordained Priest; John Soan de Goto, also a student and Catechist, 21 years old; James Kisai, 64 years old, he had the

care of the domestic affairs, and was remarkable for his continual meditation on the passion of Christ. These three Jesuit Saints were native Japanese. The Confessors of the Faith were sentenced to the death of the cross by the tyrant Taicosa-ma. The sentence was posted up in Meca-o, and the next day they were brought out and their right ears cut off, and then paraded through the city, their hands tied behind them. The day following, the 3rd of January, tied on asses, they commenced their painful journey from town to town, they were then but 24 in number, but Peter and Francis, who followed to serve them, were taken up and suffered with them. It would take too long to recount the sufferings of the martyrs by sea and land, till they arrived at Nagasaki where, upon the 5th of February, in 1597, their executioners, fearing that they would be rescued by the Christians, tied them to crosses and pierced them through and through with spears. The father of one of the children, Anthony, besought him to have pity on him and apostatise, but the noble youth refused, and taking off the garment he wore cast it to his parent saying, "Behold the robe you gave me, I will now naked follow my Redeemer." The father of John de Goto, on the contrary, exhorted him to keep firm and seal his faith with his blood. Paul Miki preached most eloquently from the Cross, and Peter Baptist with his dying breath, a sponge being placed in his hand, baptised a woman who was deaf and dumb, and not alone gave her spiritual life but restored her to speech and hearing. Their bodies remained on the crosses for two months uncorrupted and untouched by the birds of the air, till at last liberty was given to bury them. Their Beatification took place in 1628 under Urban 8th. The Canonization, as we have seen, by Pius IX., in 1862. A holy Confessor, Michael de Sanctis, was also canonized. He was born in Catolonia, in Spain, in 1591, and from his childhood led an angelic life. At an early age he joined the austere Order of Discalced Trinitarians. His life was seraphic, his evangelical poverty so great that like his Master he had not even a cell of his own. He lived for God alone and for his neighbours salvation, and at length, consumed more by the fire of Divine love than by disease, he died in the Convent of Valladolid, in the 34th year of his age.

Such are the glorious Saints whose Canonization we have celebrated and whose intercession we invoke. It is wonderful to see the Father of the faithful amidst all his sorrows, the spoliation of his States and the atrocious persecution of the Church in Italy, celebrating this grand Festival with a splendour never attained in what are called the palmy days of the Popedom. Never before, however, was the power of the Pope so great, so deeply rooted in the hearts of the people

as at present. The apparent weakness of the Pope at Rome, has strengthened him over the world. The unheard of assembly of the Bishops of the world and the spirit of martyrdom which animates them, willing if necessary, to follow their Father to exile and to death, the enthusiasm of the people which I have witnessed, especially in France, where thousands accompanied the foreign Bishops to the place of embarkation cheering them, and singing the hymn of the Blessed Virgin till their voices were lost in the distance, as the vessel receded from the shore, all this gives to Pius IX. a force which man cannot take from him, and before which millions of bayonets are powerless. Was not even the enthusiastic reception you gave me on my return from the centre of Catholicity, a proof of your ardent attachment to the Catholic Faith in its Head, Pius IX. the great and the good. It is consoling too to the friends of the Popedom to see amidst the wreck and ruin of beautiful Italy, the limited territory he still preserves like the Ark of Noah, the only place of security in that unhappy land. The population of Rome has increased during the last few years over 10,000. On every side you see progress in public and private buildings. You can see no starvation, you hear of no ejectments, no agrarian outrages, no partial administration of justice, no complaints that vengeance or impunity is dealt to the criminal in the name of law, according not to the crime, but to the dictates of party. I firmly believe that no more paternal government exists than that of the Sovereign Pontiff, and if the primary object of government be the greatest happiness of the greatest number, and not the support of idlers who have no means of living unless at the public expense, I unhesitatingly assert that no where is that object more fully realised than in the States of the Church. 'Tis said that the Pope is kept on his throne by foreign bayonets. 'Tis true he is protected from the ferocious hordes of Sardinian revolutionists by the French arms, for in presence of the French Eagle the daggers fall from the hands of those hungry infidels, but the Pope requires no protection against his own subjects all he wants is non-intervention. Let the Sardinians be prevented from invading the property of Christendom, and the Pope would be secure on the oldest throne in the world. The so-called Italian Parliament voted Rome their Capital, as well might the American Congress vote Quebec their chief fortress, Cuba their summer garden, or Newfoundland their advanced Naval Station—Rome belongs to Catholicity. Without a Temporal Sovereignty in the present state of the world it would be (unless by some extraordinary disposition of Providence) impossible for the Pope to have liberty to govern the Church. He cannot be the subject of any King or Emperor, he may be their prisoner

as St. Peter and many of his predecessors were, but Christendom would not long suffer this—the most powerful of them all, once tried it, and the solitary grave of St. Helena tells the result. Would it be possible for the Pope to collect around him, as at the late Canonization, the Bishops of the World had he not an independent territory. There all could meet in peace. If the Pope was a subject of the King of Italy, or the Emperor of France or Austria, such a meeting would be impossible. It was most consoling also to mark the strength of the Holy Father, for the lying infidel press had so often talked of his failing health that his devoted children feared there might be some truth in it. I will not dilate on the benevolence and amiability of His Holiness, even his enemies allow that. He empowered each Bishop present to publish a plenary Indulgence in every parish on his return to his Diocese, and impart the Apostolical Benediction. The illustrious Senator and Conservators of Rome conferred on each Bishop present the dignity St. Paul gloried in, the rights and privileges of a noble Roman citizen. The great celebration is now at an end; but it has moved all mankind, and shown the enemies of the Church that Faith, as the Apostle says, conquers the world. In conclusion, Dearly Beloved Brethren, I cannot find words sufficient to thank you for the extraordinary manifestation of love, respect and affection, shown to me on my return. I can only repay you by my prayers, and if possible, by my exertions for your spiritual and temporal welfare.

I remain,

Dearly Beloved Brethren,

Yours devoted in Jesus Christ,

† **JOHN T. MULLOCK,**
Bishop of St. John's.

St. John's, July 28th, 1862.